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Involuntary Job Loss:
Impact and Potential Moderators

by

Gail Cleary

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and research in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Counselling Psychology

Department of Educational Psychology

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 1995

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DATE: February 16, 1995

DEDICATION

To my mother, for teaching me that knowledge is one of life's greatest gifts.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between the impact of job loss and several potential moderating factors under current social and economic conditions. Recent literature suggests that the experience of job loss may be changing due to escalating layoffs among white collar workers coupled with the existence of a social safety net. As such, there has been a move away from research of basic issues such as finances toward more abstract issues such as identity. In order to test this theory, several factors were evaluated in relation to job loss impact including age, gender, education, income, economic deprivation, job involvement and identity achievement status.

Fifty adult volunteers who had been laid off within the last 12 months participated in this study. Each completed a series of four questionnaires including a Demographic/Information form, Lodahl and Kenjer's (1965) measure of Job Involvement, Bennion, Adams and Huh's (1989) Revised Extended Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS-2) and a Job Loss Impact questionnaire which assessed the level of negative impact experienced after a job loss.

Age, economic deprivation and interpersonal identity achievement status were all found to be significantly related to the experienced impact of job loss at the .05 confidence level. A significant positive correlation between age and job loss impact of .28 was found. In terms of economic deprivation, a significant positive correlation of .50 was observed between job loss impact and amount of financial hardship experienced. A negative correlation of .36 was observed between job loss impact and interpersonal identity achievement

status. Job involvement and ideological identity achievement status were not found to be significantly related to job loss impact.

Contrary to expectations, the results obtained provide little support for the suggestion that the experience of job loss may be changing. The factor which was associated with the greatest levels of negative job loss impact was still observed to be economic deprivation. Based on the results of the current study, it would appear, that, at least for now, job loss remains a basic threat despite changing demographics and the existence of a social safety net.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The current economic recession coupled with budgetary cutbacks necessary for debt reduction, have resulted in a job loss crisis in the Province of Alberta. Whether termed *downsizing, displacement, cutbacks, lay offs, restructuring,* or in rare instances, a *golden handshake,* the end product has been thousands of lost jobs and drastically reduced job security. The concern of this investigation is to study factors which may moderate the effects of job loss.

Interest in the effects of job loss peaked during the depression of the 1930s, and much of what we know about these issues stems from that period in history. It is assumed that the reactions of individuals to the current crisis may be different than what was experienced in the 1930s when job loss was relatively restricted to blue collar workers. Today, every job is at risk, with the heaviest losses occurring in previously secure areas of employment. In an age where "tough choices" have to be made, those affected may not only have to deal with job loss, but with the knowledge that it is they who have been deemed expendable although performing work of value. It is believed that this may constitute a threat to the identity of those who have been laid off and those whose jobs yet hang in the balance; the resultant effect of which may make them more vulnerable to the negative effects of job loss and less up to the challenge of finding a new niche in a community which has rendered them superfluous.

Theoretical Background

Job loss and its effects has been the focus of numerous research studies, articles and books over the last sixty years. The most extensive investigation of job loss issues took place during the 1930s in response to the unprecedented number of jobs lost as a result of the Great Depression. Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) evaluated the available research of the day and concluded that devastation was the inevitable outcome of job loss.

Changing social conditions, such as the development of a social safety net, has broadened the focus of job loss research beyond its capacity for devastation. How job loss affects an individual, which individuals are prone to negative effects, and understanding job loss at both a personal and global level have all become areas of interest.

Jahoda (1982) suggested that under current social conditions, the effects of job loss may be best understood in terms of deprivation rather than devastation. In her model of unemployment, negative effects associated with job loss are attributed to the absence of positive experiences provided by employment. Similarly, Warr (1987) suggested a "vitamin model" of job loss. He believes that job loss diminishes access to factors necessary for mental health which leaves the individual open to negative outcomes.

Interest in job loss research has also focused on specific factors which influence or moderate an individual's response to job loss. A number of such moderators have been proposed and studied over the years including availability of informal and formal support, attributions of blame, economic class, economic deprivation, length of unemployment, reason for job loss, job options, work involvement, age, skills, education, self-worth, and coping ability (Kirsh, 1992).

Social conditions continue to change and for the first time in history, vast numbers of white collar workers, who have previously been secure, are losing their jobs. This change has prompted questions regarding the applicability of previous research to this new population. Specifically, attention is turning to issues of identity. Several investigators, Lodahl and Kenjer (1965), Swinburne (1981), and Joelson and Wahlquist (1987), have proposed a link between identity and job loss impact. Peregoy and Schliebner (1990) suggest that the degree to which the individual derives identity through work may be the single most important factor in determining the impact of job loss.

Research in this area has been somewhat impeded by the confusion surrounding a definition of identity. Erik Erikson (1956; 1968; 1980) introduced the concept of identity as part of his theory of human development. He believes that individuals face a series of crises at different periods in their lives, which when adequately resolved, lead to healthy development and maturation. The identity crisis is the main task of adolescence, in which the adolescent must differentiate self from others to construct a unique and independent identity. Erikson sees work issues as a vital part of this process. He believes that failure to choose an occupation, and commit oneself to work, is a major reason for unsuccessful identity crisis resolution.

James Marcia (1966) believed in the importance of Erikson's ideas and constructed an interview technique with which to measure the amount of identity development an individual had undergone. Marcia suggested that individuals could be classified into four levels, or statuses, based on the amount of crisis and/or commitment experienced. The four statuses from most developed to least developed were termed

Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Diffusion. Research in this area was further extended by Bennion and Adams (1986) who developed an objective measure of Marcia's four identity statuses.

Many others have proposed theories of identity which differ from Erikson's including; Biddle (1979), Burke (1980), Hart, Maloney and Damon (1987) and Rossan (1987). However, they lack the theoretical and practical support of Erikson's approach.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine factors which may moderate the effects of job loss under current social and economic conditions. Based on the literature, a number of potential moderators were selected for study including age, gender, education, economic class, economic deprivation, job involvement and identity status. Fifty adult volunteers laid off from their jobs within the last 12 months participated in the study. Data was gathered on each of the potential moderators and on the effects of job loss through a series of four questionnaires. The results were then correlated to evaluate the relationship between each of potential moderating variables and the impact of job loss. It was hoped that a greater understanding of the challenges this group of the unemployed face, may be of use in terms of providing assistance both meaningful and relevant to today's situation.

Overview of the Chapters

A statement of the research problem and a brief theoretical overview are presented in Chapter one. A detailed discussion of the relevant literature and the research questions generated from it are found

in Chapter two. The research methodology is outlined in Chapter three. The results are presented in Chapter four. The results are discussed along with implications and suggestions for further research in Chapter five.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Discussion in this chapter begins with an overview of the effects of unemployment from the 1930s to the present, followed by an examination of factors which have been found to moderate them. Attention is focused on one moderating variable, identity, of which two aspects, job involvement and identity status, are explored. The potential of identity functioning as a moderator of unemployment effects and the usefulness of such an approach is then discussed. Next, theories and issues in the study of identity are explored, focusing on the work of Erik Erikson and James Marcia. Identity is then defined for the purposes of this study and gender issues in identity research are discussed. Finally, a summary and research questions arising from the literature are presented.

Unemployment

Introduction

Beginning with the Great Depression of the 1930s, unemployment and its effects have been the focus of much research, speculation and debate. Over the decades the nature of the investigations has shifted, reflecting evolving social conditions which have altered the landscape of the unemployed. By the 1970s economic conditions had changed such that job loss was no longer primarily restricted to the lesser skilled members of society (Kaufman, 1982). It had encroached upon the realm of the highly skilled, well-educated professional. The recession and rapid inflation of the 1980s continued this trend with many businesses "downsizing" in

order to remain viable in the shrinking economy (Kates, Greiff & Hagen, 1990). Today, most of the world is suffering from a heavy burden of debt incurred during this recession. The desperation measures of "downsizing" and "reduction" of the last decade have seemingly been adopted as the main solution to our continuing economic woes by certain governments and, less charitably, as ". . . ongoing corporate interventions designed to boost profitability" (Leana & Feldman, 1992, p. 2) in the private sector. Despite high rates of job loss resulting from these factors, the combination of our current social welfare system (Jahoda, 1982) and the increasing numbers of layoffs in more privileged sectors of society, means that job loss now results in varying degrees of economic hardship rather than absolute privation as in the 1930s. As such, the focus of current research is shifting toward the meaning of job loss, its psychological effects and the response of the individual rather than the prior concentration on its capacity for devastation (Leana & Feldman, 1992).

The 1930's

The economic devastation of the 1930s sparked a tide of research into the effects of unemployment. Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) reviewed the evidence collected and found the general consensus was ". . . that unemployment tends to make people more emotionally unstable than they were previous to unemployment" (p. 359). They also found that there was agreement on three factors, prestige value, availability of alternatives, and relative economic hardship, which were thought to influence the likelihood of being "broken" by the experience of job loss. The impact of unemployment was thought to be greatest on those who derived much of their prestige value or social status from their work, on

those who did not have an alternate source of value such as personal achievement, and on those who were used to a comfortable income.

Another important result of Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld's review was that it allowed them to describe a stage theory approach which provided a framework within which a wide range of responses to unemployment could be understood. They suggested that despite individual differences due to preunemployment variables, the typical response to job loss is: *shock* upon losing a job; *optimism* while actively seeking employment; *pessimism* as the job hunt fails to produce results; and finally, *fatalism*. In this model, the final outcome of unemployment is for the person to be "broken", with the as yet unbroken presumably taking longer to traverse the stages.

> It may be that all have the same course, except that the unbroken take a longer time before becoming broken than those who begin as distressed or broken individuals (p. 378).

Thus, in their view, preunemployment variables were seen to merely prolong the negative downward spiral created by unemployment rather than leading to different and potentially more positive outcomes.

Unemployment Effects Beyond the Depression

Despite the depth of the coverage in the 1930s, many writers have wondered whether the unemployment research conducted then represents the last word on the issue and if the discoveries made at that time are necessarily still applicable to the experience of today. Jahoda (1982) voices these reservations:

> Too much has changed both in the social climate and in the aspirations, values, hopes and fears, needs and beliefs of the population in the last fifty years for leaving it at that (p. 15).

Indeed, far from being abandoned, research into unemployment has been a rich and varied field of investigation which has followed the rise and fall of unemployment rates over the years. As might be expected, a substantial portion of this research has focused on delimiting the negative effects unemployment may engender.

Kabanoff (1982) points out that unemployment has been identified by public opinion and correlational/anecdotal/impressionistic research as ". . . the cause of every conceivable personal and social ill including crime, drug addiction, mental illness, alcoholism, violence, suicide and generally anti-social and maladaptive behavior", and that care must be taken when evaluating the evidence in terms of psychological research standards (p. 38). Such a course was taken by Fryer and Payne (1986) who carefully evaluated over one hundred studies concerning the effects of unemployment. They concluded:

> In all cases, the evidence suggests that groups of the unemployed have higher mean levels of experienced strain and negative feelings, and lower mean levels of happiness, present life satisfaction, experience of pleasure and positive feelings, than comparable employed people. Where there is longitudinal evidence groups who became employed during the course of the studies exhibit means which improve compared with continuously unemployed groups (p. 247)

Additional effects which have been attributed to unemployment include the following: apathy (Feather, 1982), purposelessness (Jahoda, 1982), and more physical health symptoms, lower desire for influence and control at work, more external locus of control, greater use of helping agencies and more solitary leisure pursuits (O'Brien & Kabanoff, 1979).

Other investigators have chosen to look at the issue from a different angle, in terms of what an individual misses out on while unemployed rather than in terms of the negative effects unemployment is believed to generate. This is referred to as the deprivation model (Fryer & Payne, 1986) which runs counter to the stage model of unemployment effects proposed by Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld. Jahoda (1982) suggests that the unemployed are deprived of five basic experiences which employment enforces:

> . . . the imposition of a time structure, the enlargement of the scope of social experience into areas less emotionally charged than family life, participation in a collective purpose or effort, the assignment by virtue of employment of status and *identity* [italics added], and required regular activity (p. 59).

These experiences are seen to be a psychological requirement of modern life, and individuals are expected to suffer the effects of unemployment to the degree that they are unable to get these needs met in alternate ways.

Warr (1987), expanding on Jahoda's work, developed a vitamin model of mental health. He suggests that there are nine environmental factors necessary for positive mental health: opportunity for control,

opportunity for skill use, externally generated goals, variety, environmental clarity, availability of money, physical security, opportunity for interpersonal contact and valued social position. The more one has of each of these nine factors, the more likely one is to experience good mental health. He sees unemployment as diminishing access to all of these factors, thus leaving the affected individual open to negative outcomes.

Moderating Variables

The last sixty years of research has convincingly linked the experience of job loss to a wide range of negative consequences. Despite this knowledge, understanding of individual responses remains problematic. Responses appear to be, ". . . unique to each individual, resulting from the idiosyncratic combination of one's own particular circumstances" (Swinburne, 1981, p. 47). Thus, a need was perceived to search for variables which may influence the degree to which individuals experience negative consequences of job loss (Warr, 1982).

As with investigations of unemployment effects, the research into potential moderating factors has been diverse. Kirsh (1992) provides a summary list of fourteen factors which have been suggested to influence the degree of emotional distress experienced by those who have lost a job. They include: availability of informal support by relatives and friends and formal support through counselling and social services, attributions of blame for being unemployed, economic class, relative amount of economic deprivation, length of unemployment, reason for job loss, reality of job options available, level of an individual's work

involvement, age, skill and educational level, state of health, sense of self-worth, ability to handle loss, and ability to occupy free time. Kirsh suggests that while there is not yet enough evidence to substantiate all of these variables as moderators, there is evidence that strong social support and coming from a higher economic class help reduce the negative effects of job loss while internal attributions of blame and a high degree of work involvement tend to increase them.

Involvement

Involvement in work is one variable which merits closer examination. Lodahl & Kenjer (1965) were the first to attempt the development of a definition and subsequent measure of job involvement. As part of this process, they reviewed the work of others who recognized job involvement but who referred to it by many other names. They found that despite differences in terminology, there was agreement on certain key elements which separate those with high involvement from those with low involvement:

> These definitions have a common core of meaning in that they describe the job-involved person as one for whom work is very important part of life, and as one who is affected very much personally by his whole job situation: the work itself, his co-workers, the company, etc. On the other hand, the non-job-involved worker does his living off the job. Work is not as important a part of his psychological life. His interests are elsewhere, and the core of his self-image, the essential part of his identity, is not

> greatly affected by the kind of work he does or how well he does it (p. 25).

This analysis of past work lead to the development of a two part definition of *job involvement*. For the purpose of constructing their objective measure, it was defined as ". . . the internalization of values about the goodness of work or the importance of work in the worth of the person" (p. 24), and ". . . the degree to which a person's work performance affects his self-esteem" (p. 25).

Warr, Cook and Wall (1979) developed two separate measures, work involvement and intrinsic job motivation, to address what they perceived as definitional difficulties in the work of Lodahl and Kenjer. They see the first part of Lodahl and Kenjer's definition as reflecting *work involvement*, or, ". . . the degree to which a person wants to be engaged in work". The second part of the definition was seen to reflect *intrinsic job motivation*, or, ". . . the degree to which a person wants to work well in a specific job in order to achieve intrinsic satisfaction" (p. 130). According to Warr et. al., a single definition and measure are inadequate to separate out what they believe to be two important but distinct aspects.

Investigations into both aspects of job involvement have revealed a connection between level of involvement and severity of experienced negative effects. Three studies provide evidence that work involvement moderates response to unemployment. Warr (1978) examined the relationship between motivation to work and psychological well-being in a large sample of unemployed steel-workers. His investigation revealed that people who are less concerned about finding work, those having *low work orientation*, did not experience changes in well-being when

unemployed. Warr and Jackson (1987) gathered additional support for this position. In a study of men unemployed for an average of twenty-five months, they found adaptation, measured in terms of affective well-being, was poorer when the unemployed had a high commitment to having a job, belonged to the median age range and had fewer contacts outside of work. Stafford, Jackson and Banks (1980) measured work involvement in young people and found not only that high involvement is associated with worse mental health in the unemployed, but that employed people with low work involvement also have lower levels of mental health.

Leana & Feldman (1992) obtained evidence that job involvement, as measured by Lodahl and Kenjer's (1965) scale, also acts as a moderator of unemployment effects. They examined responses of two distinct unemployed groups, aerospace industry workers and steel workers. The results revealed that people who reported greater involvement with their previous jobs experienced job loss as more intense and less reversible and also reported more physiological distress, behavioral distress and depressive affect. Financial distress and perceived difficult labour market conditions were also found to lead the experience of job loss as more intense and less reversible.

Indirect evidence for both meanings of job involvement affecting the outcome of job loss may come from a study conducted by Little (1976). He found that among middle class technical professionals, 48% had a positive attitude toward job loss. The reason given was that it was perceived as a way of escaping from an undesirable job without having to take responsibility for the decision. For this sample, commitment to having a job may have been high enough to prevent them from quitting,

while commitment to the particular job being performed was diminished to the point where escape became desirable.

The evidence collected so far suggests a strong connection between level of involvement in work and negative reactions experienced after job loss. Both commitment to work in general and commitment to a job in particular seem to act as moderators of unemployment effects.

Identity and Unemployment

Identity as a Moderator

Studies of work involvement are interesting because they focus attention on how the *meaning* of work in one's life prior to becoming unemployed affects response to job loss. Swinburne (1981) points out that there is a long history of contradictory attitudes toward work which prevail not only in the literature related to work, but in society as a whole. One attitude is that work is central to our lives giving meaning and purpose. The other is that work is a necessary and alienating evil. Thus she proposes that unemployment could result in loss of meaning or purpose, or, in liberation, depending upon which view one held prior to job loss. She examined this assumption using a sample of managerial/professional staff. The results obtained suggested:

> . . . that these attitudes, and hence reactions to unemployment, were not mutually exclusive but coexisted, the meaning of the loss of work depending on the meaning which work had originally. *It appeared that the more central was occupational identity to the self-concept and the*

> *purpose of life, the greater the experience of loss.*
> . .(p. 52-53, italics added)

This discovery, that the intensity of negative reactions generated by unemployment is affected by the relative contribution of work to an individual's identity, is a logical extension of the original work on job involvement. Swinburn's (1981) treatment of the contradictory attitudes toward work appears to reflect the differentiation between high and low job-involved individuals described by Lodahl & Kenjer (1965). Those who view work as central and giving life meaning and purpose fit the description of individuals possessing high job involvement, while viewing work as a necessary evil is characteristic of those possessing low job involvement. In a sense then, degree of job involvement may be an objective indicator of the relative contribution work makes to a given individual's identity.

Additional evidence suggesting that identity may be an important moderating factor of unemployment comes from a longitudinal study by Joelson & Wahlquist (1987). They investigated reactions to job loss experienced by shipyard workers over a two year period. It was found that psychological crises experienced during unemployment were due to loss of important identity forming factors; work as a time structuring factor, work as proof of ones competence and knowledge, and work as a structure of relationships. They concluded that, "What we are and how we regard ourselves is to a great part determined by our occupation and our performance and success at work" (p. 181).

Peregoy and Schliebner (1990) propose a much stronger relationship between job loss and identity. They believe that the single most important

factor in determining the impact of unemployment on any individual, is the degree to which the individual's vocational and ego identity (as defined by Erik Erikson) is associated with the role of worker. They examined this assumption through in-depth interviews over a two year period. The evidence collected was used to construct a model, the Personal Employment Identity Model (PEIM), which groups varying reactions to job loss in terms of the degree of identity derived from work. They propose that response to job loss can be classified into four types of reactions: loss, challenge, strain, and low investment. People in the *loss* category are those who strongly define their identity through work, often to the exclusion of other relationships. They are said to suffer the severest reactions to job loss including: immobilization, shock, numbness, loss of control, self-blame/doubt, chemical abuse and suicidal thoughts. People in the *challenge* category also find considerable meaning and identity in work, however, it is not the only focus of their lives. Consequently, reactions to job loss are less severe including: depression, insecurity, helplessness, resentment, mood shifts, anger and guilt. Sadness, frustration, apathy and feelings of uncertainty toward an unknown future characterize the reactions of those in the *strain* category for whom a moderate amount of identity is derived from work. Finally, people in the *low investment* category are said to experience the least severe effects after job loss. For them, work is simply a means to supporting a chosen life-style, so reactions to unemployment tend to focus on fear of shrinking finances, stress related to the search for a new job and frustration with limited information needed to obtain new employment.

Usefulness of an Identity Approach

The model proposed by Peregoy and Schliebner (1990) is extremely useful in that it helps address a void in the unemployment literature. There seems to be an abundance of investigations on the deleterious effects of unemployment and a growing interest in the search for potential moderating factors. However, attempts to construct models which allow us to predict the effects unemployment may have upon individuals, appear to be lacking. This lack may be due to both theoretical and practical considerations. From a theoretical standpoint, the effects of job loss on any given individual may not be deemed as important as understanding its universal impact given the escalating world-wide rates of unemployment. Jahoda (1988) is a strong promoter of this view and suggests that research efforts should focus on developing explanations which transcend the individual. Practical considerations stem from the diversity of approaches and topics covered in the investigation of unemployment. Feather (1990) suggests that since research into unemployment covers such a wide spectrum, attempts to integrate the findings into one set of theoretical principles are naive. He believes a more realistic approach to the problem is to carve up the field of study, applying middle range theories from different fields of psychology such as human motivation, developmental psychology, social psychology, and organizational research and concentrate on the parts before trying to fathom the whole.

Despite these considerations, understanding the effects of unemployment in terms of individual identity formation may be highly relevant. Unemployment is now rising globally, however, the most rapid increases appear to be occurring in educated/professional groups which

have traditionally been secure. It is likely that people in these groups are committed to their jobs and derive a substantial portion of their identities through them. In Peregoy and Shliebner's (1992) model, this places them at risk for experiencing a highly negative reaction to job loss.

Given the scarcity of available jobs, these individuals may face the loss of a major source of identity with little hope of replacement through a comparable position. For those who are fortunate enough to secure new employment of a different or reduced nature, the result is still unlikely to be a return to the pre job loss state. Evidence to this effect may come from Burke (1984) who studied job loss in plant workers during a period of high unemployment. He found that obtaining a new job inferior to the one lost resulted in lower levels of satisfaction and well being. Leisure activities, which increase greatly after job loss, also may not serve as a source of replacement for the identity that an individual derives from work. Kelvin (1981) details a list of the shortcomings of leisure in this regard: it fails to structure daily life having no external time-table, it does not provide a pattern of social relationships imposed by interdependence on a continuing basis, and most importantly, it is freely chosen, therefore it lacks the component of necessity which is required to experience a task as "real" and having meaning.

> To be 'mature', 'sound', 'stable', 'adequate', and so forth, is to be able to cope with this reality of external obligations and demands. The pre-eminent source of such demands is work . . . The structure provided by these external demands then becomes an integral part of the structure of expectations which the individual has of himself - in that his need and ability to

> meet them (even if he does not want to) becomes an essential part of the concept he has of himself (p. 10).

Job loss, then, is occurring in a social climate in which alternate sources from which to derive an identity are not readily available. If one's response to job loss is dependent upon the relative amount of identity derived from work, and one is not able to compensate for the loss in another manner, the effects on highly committed individuals could be expected to be not only severe, but prolonged. Thus, job loss may currently have a very different meaning for the individual, and society as a whole, than was observed in earlier periods of high unemployment.

Theories of Identity

> Theorizing about identity is like traversing a battlefield. Though strewn only with the debris of unconsolidated thought rather than unexploded shells, it is no less deadly (Breakwell, 1986, p. 10).

Although identity may indeed be a powerful moderator of unemployment effects with growing social relevance, research in the literature remains both unfocused and sparse. This may be due in large measure to a lack of a generally accepted theory about its structure. In this section, a brief discussion of various perspectives on identity will be presented with the goal of understanding potential relationships between identity and work, and how they may be affected by the experience of job loss.

Erikson's Theory of Ego Identity

Erik Erikson (1956; 1968; 1980) introduced the concept of identity as a part of his model of human psychosocial development. In this model, the formation of an identity is presented as one of life's central themes, beginning very early in childhood and continuing over the lifespan. Identity formation occurs through the process of *ego development*. It starts when introjection and identification are no longer useful in helping the child define who he/she is in the world. Tentative crystallizations of identity occur during the course of childhood providing children with a sense of knowing approximately who they are. However, this sense is continually challenged by the the discontinuities that ongoing development generates. Throughout this process, it is the function of the ego:

> . . . to integrate the psychosexual and psychosocial aspects on a given level of development and at the same time to integrate the relation of newly added identity elements with those already in existence - that is, to bridge the inescapable discontinuities between different levels of personality development . . . for earlier crystallizations of identity. (Erikson, 1968, p. 162)

Erikson based his theory of development on the epigenetic principle which posits that each part of a growing organism has its time of special ascendancy, and that these parts rise in turn to form a functioning whole (see Table 1). Human development was suggested to consist of a series of eight bipolar tasks, each reaching ascendancy, or becoming a *crisis*, according to a timetable of physical and psychological readiness (Erikson,

1956, p. 75). A crisis in this sense is not a threat to the individual, but ". . . a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential. . ." (Erikson, 1968, p. 96). As such, both positive and negative outcomes are possible, although only the positive resolution of a crisis results in ego growth.

Table 1

Erikson's Eight Stages of Epigenetic Development

Stage	Task
1. Infancy	Trust vs Mistrust
2. Early Childhood	Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt
3. Play Age	Initiative vs Guilt
4. School Age	Industry vs Inferiority
5. Adolescence	Identity vs Identity diffusion
6. Young Adult	Intimacy vs Isolation
7. Adulthood	Generativity vs Self Absorption
8. Mature Age	Integrity vs Despair

The formation of a positive ego identity is proposed to be the central task of adolescence. According to Erikson (1980), a sense of ego identity ". . . is the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity (one's ego in the psychological sense) is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p. 94). An individual's ego identity is thought to gain real strength only by receiving

wholehearted and consistent recognition of accomplishments deemed meaningful by his/her culture. In our culture, the challenge to the adolescent is the need to commit to physical intimacy, occupational choice, energetic competition and psychosocial self-definition during a period of rapid and sometimes overwhelming physical and psychological changes (Erikson, 1956).

In order to accomplish this, adolescents are thought to enter a psychosocial moratorium in which they may safely explore various aspects of adulthood:

> . . . the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made for him . . . It is a period that is characterized by a selective permissiveness on the part of society and of provocative playfulness on the part of youth, and yet it also often leads to deep, if often transitory, commitment on the part of youth, and ends in a more or less ceremonial confirmation of commitment on the part of society (Erikson, 1968, p. 156-157).

The end of this period marks the identity crisis in which an adult identity must be forged. Failure to successfully resolve the elements of the identity crisis and achieve a sense of ego identity, results in *identity diffusion*, or an inability to achieve a focus or purpose in life. Identity diffusion can lead to serious negative consequences including the inability to form intimate relationships, adoption of a negative identity, and breakdown of the personality. Interestingly, examinations of many identity diffused

individuals led Erikson to conclude that, ". . . it is primarily the inability to settle on an occupational identity which disturbs young people" (1980, p. 97).

On the other hand, a successful resolution of the identity crisis sees the individual with a fully-developed, but by no means static, sense of ego identity. It is important to note that for Erikson, ego identity is not a state so much as it is a process. In his view, ". . . ego identity could be said to be characterized by the actually attained but forever-to-be-revised sense of reality of the Self within social reality (Erikson, 1968, p. 211). By self, Erikson refers to the sense of self-identity which evolves out of exploration and eventual integration of various selves into an ensemble of roles. Achievement of an ego identity thus allows an individual to synthesize new selves into a stable identity structure allowing for a degree of self-sameness and continuity not possible prior to adolescence.

Marcia's Identity Status Approach

Perhaps the greatest advancement of Erikson's theory stemmed from the work of James Marcia. Marcia (1966), seeing the importance of Erikson's concepts, developed an interview method to allow for the empirical assessment of ego identity. According to Erikson, identity achievement and identity diffusion are the two possible polar outcomes of the adolescent identity crisis. Marcia suggested that people could be classified into *four* identity statuses, identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and identity diffusion, depending upon the degree of crisis and commitment they exhibited in the areas of occupational choice, religion and political ideology.

For his purposes, Marcia (1966) defined crisis as ". . . the adolescent's period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives" and commitment as ". . . the degree of personal investment an individual exhibits" (p. 551). The four identity statuses are based upon which combination of crisis and commitment an individual exhibits with the presence of both thought to reflect the most developmental sophistication and the absence of both to reflect the least (see Table 2).

Table 2

Marcia's (1966) Four Identity Statuses

	Achievement	Moratorium	Foreclosure	Diffusion
Crisis	Yes	Yes	No	No
Commitment	Yes	No	Yes	No

Identity achieved individuals are those who have experienced a crisis period and have committed to an occupation and ideology. They have made autonomous decisions after a period of struggle which has resulted in strong, well-defined commitments. They evince less confusion about their self-definition, are freer from anxiety, are less susceptible to stress, and maintain realistic levels of aspiration (Marcia, 1966)

Moratorium individual are *in* the crisis period and commitment is vague though there is an ongoing struggle to make commitments. This period is characterized by confusion and uncertainty along with

introspection and exploration. It will later provide a resource of information and experiences upon which to base important life choices. Although these individuals have not yet made commitments, they often possess sophisticated levels of self-esteem, self-directedness, curiosity, social activity, and emotional expressiveness (Marcia, 1980).

Foreclosure individuals are committed without having experienced a crisis. They make decisions regarding occupation and ideology without having first examined and experimented with alternatives. They appear to accept and internalize parental values and attitudes, becoming what it is they believe their parents expect of them. Foreclosed individuals are described as rigid (Marcia, 1966), conformist, conservative and submissive (Marcia, 1980). In our society, which values freedom of choice, foreclosure is not seen as the most adaptive way of forming an identity. However, for cultures which favor conferred rather than constructed identities, foreclosure may provide a functional identity structure (Marcia, 1980; Mitchell, 1992). In such cases, sacrificing personal choice for the sake of stability and safety is encouraged and the individual is considered complete despite not having forged their own choices.

Identity diffused individuals may or may not have experienced a crisis. They do, however, display a total lack of commitment to occupational, religious and ideological values. Because these individuals are not committed to a personal value system, they are subject to a variety of positive and negative influences. For them, one approach to life is seen as being as good as another, and they are not adverse to sampling each in a smorgasbord manner (Marcia, 1966).

Marcia (1987) suggests that the identity formed at late adolescence is the result of either a sum or synthesis of childhood identifications, social

appraisals, unique abilities and needs, physiological givens, and positive and negative results of social experimentation. While important, the identity forged at this time is not seen to be the end of the identity formation process. In addition, an unsuccessful identity crisis does not mean that an individual would never form an identity:

> Identity status at late adolescence represents only a first answer to the identity question. It is assumed that a successful solution at this age permits that openness to experience that will initiate subsequent periods of disequilibrium, identity crisis and re-resolution . . . Unsuccessful identity resolutions at late adolescence do not necessarily mean that an identity will never be constructed . . . there are plenty of disequilibriating events in a life cycle to elicit identity crises (p. 165)

For Marcia, then, identity is always in the process of change, although the rate is believed to slow progressively after the initial adolescent synthesis.

Marcia's operationalisation of Erikson's concepts proved to be pivotal in the study of identity, allowing for objective assessment in an area previously open only to theoretical examination. Reviews of the extensive literature utilizing Marcia's identity status approach are provided by Waterman (1982) and Adams, Gulotta and Markstrom-Adams (1994).

Alternate Views on Identity

Hart, Maloney and Damon (1987) credit Marcia's success in moving identity out of the realm of theory and establishing it as a measurable construct, "Marcia's approach has been so empirically robust that it has become a paradigm for identity research, with most investigations building upon Marcia's original operationalisation of the term identity" (p. 122). However, they believe that commitment alone is insufficient to account for all that is inherent in a sense of identity. They propose that two other components, knowledge that the self is continuous over time and knowledge that the self is unique and distinct, are required for a sense of personal identity to exist. They view identity formation as occurring throughout childhood and adolescence via the agencies of continuity and distinctiveness. Early in childhood, continuity and distinctiveness are seen to be maintained through immutable personal and psychological self-characteristics. Because young children are relatively cognitively unsophisticated, they have difficulty remembering important changes that occurred between infancy and childhood. This, coupled with the constancy of school, family and social relationships, serves to adequately protect the child's sense of identity. In early adolescence, the combination of rapid bodily changes and increasing cognitive sophistication act to remove the individual's ability to believe in immutable self-characteristics. Instead, continuity and distinctiveness are ". . . based upon the self's position in a social network" (p. 131). In late adolescence, the individual emerges from a slavish concern with relationships when she/he becomes aware of other sources of continuity and distinctiveness stemming from his/her unique point of view.

Rossan (1987) proposes a model of adult identity formation. In it, identity is defined as ". . . the set of complex, more-or-less integrated attitudes which the individual has concerning his/herself" (p. 304). It is comprised of three parts, subidentities, generalized traits and a core. Subidentities are the result of role enactments and are linked to positions held in the social structure. They allow people to behave differently at different times and in different situation while maintaining a sense of continuity. An example of a subidentity would be father or wife. Generalized traits are characteristics an individual attributes to him/herself because they are common to many role enactments or are part of a salient subidentity. For example, a person may consider him/herself intelligent or happy. The core is an individual's fundamental sense of self. It is believed to begin early in life and includes the most generalized, salient attributes.

Rossan suggests that there are seven sources of adult identity; appraisals made by significant others, successful participation in various roles, feedback from others in social situations, experiences of success and failure in meeting one's own standards and goals, interpretation of physical and physiological changes occurring at different points of the life cycle, cognitive style or degree to which individuals are able to tolerate ambiguity in their identities, and one's current identity which helps determine the roles one engages in as well as likely outcome and response. These sources of identity are not static or fixed. As a result, neither is an individual's adult identity which changes in response to changes in any or all of the sources.

Symbolic interactionists propose an approach to the understanding of identity which differs in terms of the degree of the individual's

involvement in identity formation. Proponents of this social psychological theory place greater emphasis upon the impact of social structure in formation of the *self*. The self is thought to emerge from society, and act in turn as an organizer of social behavior. It is viewed as a structure comprised of subunits of roles, or identities, with identities being defined as, ". . . meanings a person attributes to the self as an object in a social situation or social role" (Burke, 1980, p.18). Knowledge of the self is seen to be gained, and internalized, through interaction with others who respond to the individual as a performer of a particular role. Thus, an individual possesses not one, but several identities, equal to the number of socially acknowledged roles he/she participates in. However, roles are not necessarily equal, and may possess differing degrees of saliency, and consequently, greater or lesser significance for the individual at any given time (Stryker, 1987).

Finally, polar points of view which display the range of thought found in the identity literature, can be seen in the work of Biddle (1979) and Paranjpe (1987). Biddle considers identity from a role-theory standpoint. He suggests that any label consistently applied to a person may be considered an identity. According to him, the label need not necessarily refer to a social role. Thus even something like a nickname may both create and symbolize an identity. On the other hand, Paranjpe, who approaches identity from an Eastern perspective, suggests that an individual's identity reflects permanent aspects of the self. He distinguishes this definition of identity from "common" usage in which it refers to personal or social identities. Thus in Paranjpe's view, identity is the 'core' of the individual. For him, identity is critically important, as he

believes it functions to allow an individual to experience sameness in selfhood across situations.

While this discussion of varying views on identity has been far from exhaustive, see Weigert (1983) for a more thorough treatment, it does serve to illustrate the diversity which exists in the definition of the term and in its perceived structure and function. These differences appear to exist for at least two reasons. One is the difficulty in distinguishing between the concept of identity and concepts such as self, self-esteem, self-concept, etc. Erikson (1968) noted:

> Identity in its vaguest sense suggests, of course, much of what has been called the self by a variety of workers, be it in the form of a self-concept, a self-system, or in that of fluctuating self-experience. . . (p. 208-209)

Kabanoff (1982) goes farther, suggesting that there is considerable overlap among related psychological terms such as self-identity, self-esteem, self-concept, and self-acceptance. This fuzziness has lead to a couple of confusing trends in the literature. One is the use of these terms in a highly interchangeable fashion without clarification which leads to a loss of meaning. The other is that much of the research ostensibly conducted on identity actually involves investigations of related concepts which are more easily measured, such as self-esteem (Burke & Reitze, 1981; Rossan, 1987).

The second reason why definitions of identity vary widely may stem from theoretical considerations. How identity is abstractly or operationally defined is likely to depend upon the role it plays in a given

theory, which is in turn contingent upon the question the theory was designed to address (Breakwell, 1986). This means that the term identity can be used by many theorists yet mean completely different things. Finally, the definition of the term may also reflect investigators' philosophical orientation, encompassing their beliefs about what it means to be human.

Defining identity for the purposes of investigation can be an intimidating task in light of the lack of agreement on its structure and function. However, as with many polarized issues in life, it is likely that meaning may be found by drawing together common elements of several approaches to form a moderate position. For the purposes of this study, identity will be defined *structurally* as the core of the individual which is comprised of identifications, internalized cultural beliefs and expectations, external and internal evaluations of role performance, commitments, and values. The *process* of identity will be defined as beginning with identifications made in childhood, reaching a crisis in adolescence in which an identity must be formed to achieve focus, and continuing throughout adulthood during which reorganizations of identity occur in response to disequilibriating events/changes. *Functionally*, identity will be defined as serving the individual as an anchor, integrating new experiences so that continuity is maintained, assigning meaning to experience, and providing the individual with a sense of uniqueness.

Gender Issues in Identity Research

One issue which has arisen in identity research is the relationship between gender and identity. The original work conducted on identity by Erikson was based on a theoretical model of male identity formation. The

model was then extended to encompass female identity. The result is that Erikson's theory and consequent endeavors based upon it, such as Marcia's identity status approach, work only more or less when applied to women (Marcia, 1980).

In order to utilize an identity status approach with women, Marcia (1980) suggests that attention must be focused upon areas of crisis and commitment on which a woman's initial identity status would be likely to be formed. Establishment and maintenance of relationships were suggested to be likely candidates.

The confusion regarding the contribution of "male issues" such as occupation to a woman's identity may partially be responsible for the lack of research done into female response to unemployment. Macky and Haines (1982) suggest that little research is done on the psychological impact of unemployment on women because work is not seen to be as important to women's identity as men's. Warr (1982) describes the literature on women's employment and mental health as ". . . generally excessively simple-minded" (p. 9). However, he suggests that the existing literature indicates that for women who see themselves as being in the labour market, employment and unemployment are as influential in determining mental health as they are for men.

Blisker, Schiedel and Marcia (1988) may lend support to Warr's assertion. They examined identity status in male and female college students using an expanded version of the identity status interview which included a sexual-interpersonal content area. They found that the sexual-interpersonal area was more predictive of female identity status and that the ideology area was more predictive for male identity status. However, they did not find any difference between men in women in terms of the

contribution of the occupational area to identity status. Also, both sexes (91% of men and 89% of women) rated the occupation area as more important to their self-definition than the sexual-interpersonal area. The authors suggest that the lack of difference between the sexes in terms of the occupation area may reflect changes in women's identities over the last few decades with career issues now equally important to both sexes, at least for women with post-secondary education.

Summary

A review of the literature indicates that unemployment has had a measurable negative effect on individuals which has been well documented over the last 60 years. Unemployment rates are rising globally with the greatest increases among white collar professionals who have largely been protected from job loss in the past. Consequently, questions have arisen regarding the experience of job loss under current social and economic conditions.

A number of factors have been suggested to moderate the effects of job loss. With the shift in unemployment trends toward white collar workers, greater attention is being focused on the meaning of work as a potential moderator. Specifically, there is growing interest in examining the relationship between identity issues and response to job loss. The amount of identity invested in work, job involvement, and the contribution of work to an individual's identity structure, identity status, may both play a role in terms of the experienced severity of job loss. Thus, this study's examination of the variables which may moderate the effects of job loss will consider the following questions.

Research Questions

Question 1

A number of factors have been proposed to moderate the effects of job loss. Four variables thought to have a strong potential moderating effect are age, gender, education and economic class. Therefore, the first question in this study will examine the relationship between these four demographic variables and response to job loss.

Question 2

Economic deprivation is a variable which in the past has been suggested to have a considerable moderating effect on response to job loss. Therefore, the second question in this study will examine the relationship between two aspects of economic deprivation, estimated financial hardship and contribution of the lost job to the household economy, and response to job loss.

Question 3

The shift in unemployment trends toward greater inclusion of white collar workers has sparked interest in the ability of *meaning* oriented factors, particularly identity, to moderate the effects of job loss. Therefore, the third question in this study will examine the relationship between two identity variables, identity status and job involvement, and response to job loss.

Question 4

Gender has been suggested to be an important variable in identity research. Questions have been raised regarding the validity of the assumption that work is more important to the identity of males than females. Therefore, the fourth question in this study will examine the relationship between gender and identity variables.

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this descriptive research study was to examine the relationship between job loss impact and several potential moderating variables in adults laid off within the last 12 months. Data was collected through the administration of four objective measures. The information gathered was tested using Pearson product-moment correlations, Point Biserial correlations, Biserial correlations, Analysis of Variance and independent T-tests to assess the potential relationships described in the research questions presented at the end of Chapter II.

Sample

In theory, a random sample of all individuals laid off within a given period is possible, as Government records of all individuals in this target population exist. Access to this information is highly restricted, however, making random sampling impossible in this study. Therefore, selection of participants for this study was purposive using a number of strategies including the non-probability network sampling technique described by Brink and Wood (1988). Two criteria were used to limit participation in the study. The first was that the individual must have lost a job through a layoff. The second was that the loss must have occurred within the last 12 months.

Network sampling began with the researcher asking personal contacts to supply the names of individuals who met the criteria of the study. If more than one person was suggested as a possible participant, it

was recommended that the individuals not know each other. The suggested individuals were then contacted and in turn asked to supply the names of additional individuals who met the criteria. Members of this second group were then contacted and invited to participate. This cycle was continued until no further leads were supplied. In order to help minimize the bias in this selection method, friends and family of the researcher were not asked to participate though some did provide names of individuals who met the criteria and agreed to participate.

Other methods used to obtain participants were advertisements in local papers, radio advertising and posters at unemployment offices, resource centers, and community message boards. The goal was to obtain a sample which could be shown not to differ from the population.

A total of 61 individuals meeting the criteria of the study agreed to participate. However, missing and incomplete data resulted in a final sample of 50 subjects. The majority of participants, 49, were urban dwellers. Gender representation was unequal with 35 female and 15 male participants. Age of the participants ranged from 20 to 52 years. The majority, 96%, were Caucasian. Participants were also highly educated with 62% possessing 16+ years of education A complete description of the demographic makeup of this sample is presented in Chapter 4 (see Table 3).

Sample Limitations

A major limitation is the use of a nonrandom sample. As a result, a disproportionate number of Caucasians, urban dwellers and females are represented.

A second limitation is small sample size. Interest in the study fell below the experimenter's expectations given the high number of layoffs in the Edmonton area during the past year.

A third limitation is the use of a volunteer sample. It is not known if the individuals who chose to participate are different than those who chose not to participate.

Given these limitations it is likely that generalizability of the results is limited. However, the results may yet be meaningful as they provide information regarding the *experience* of this group of individuals, and may also encourage future research in this interesting area.

Instrumentation

One demographic information form and three questionnaires were used to gather data. A description of these instruments is presented with special attention given to the development of one questionnaire which was specifically designed for use in this study.

Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS-2)

Identity status was assessed using The Revised Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (Bennion & Adams, 1986). This questionnaire provides an objective measure of an individual's identity status. It is based on Marcia's (1964) Identity Status Interview and assesses the presence or absence of exploration and/or commitment in ideological and interpersonal identity domains. Of the 64 items, half assess ideological identity in the areas of occupation, religion, politics and philosophical life-style while the other half assesses interpersonal identity

in the areas of friendship, dating sex roles and recreation. Items are responded to on a 6-point Likert scale which requires participants to indicate their level of agreement with each of the statements.

Raw scores on each of the eight subscales may be used for analysis or scoring rules may be applied to obtain an overall identity status as well as identity status in the ideological and interpersonal domains (Adams, Bennion & Huh, 1989). Identity status is classified into one of four types, achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion.

The psychometric properties of the EOM-EIS-2 were determined using data collected on university students in Utah and Texas, however, the manual includes data for individuals ranging from 12 to 30 years of age. Bennion and Adams (1986) reported internal consistency values ranging from .62 to .75 for the ideological subscales and .58 to .80 for the interpersonal subscales. Concurrent validity with Rosenthal's (1981) identity measure is reported to be demonstrated at the $p < .001$ confidence level (Bennion & Adams, 1986).

For the purposes of this study subjects were compared using raw score data on the achievement subscale in the ideological and interpersonal content areas, as well as on the combined achievement raw score. A copy of the EOM-EIS-2 appears in Appendix A.

Job Involvement

A 20 item questionnaire was constructed by Lodahl and Kenjer (1965) to assesses job involvement which they defined as the importance of work in the worth of the person and the degree to which work performance affects self-esteem. Items are responded to on a 4-point Likert scale which requires participants to indicate their level of agreement with

each of the statements. Scores can then be compared to data obtained on 3 groups exhibiting varying levels of job involvement. Split-half reliability (Spearman-Brown) for this measure is reported to range between .72 - 89. Validity has been demonstrated through success in discriminating between distinct groups and expected relationship of job involvement to other variables such as age, position and nature of work. A copy of this questionnaire appears in Appendix B.

Job Loss Impact Assessment

A preexisting objective, standardized measure of response to job loss could not be located for use in this study. Therefore, a questionnaire was constructed by the researcher based on negative consequences of unemployment previously reported in the literature which include; anger, frustration, sadness, decreased security, stress/strain, decreased health, decreased happiness and positive feelings, decreased life satisfaction, lack of time structure, decreased personal control, decreased self-esteem, relationship strain, economic strain, loss of friendships and interaction, decreased purpose and meaning, increased chemical abuse, immobilization, suicidal thoughts, helplessness, resentment, mood shifts, guilt and apathy.

An initial 50 item draft of the questionnaire was constructed. It was then presented to three individuals of greatly varied employment background who had recently experienced a layoff. They were asked to assess the items for appropriateness, relevance, readability and clarity. It was also presented to an expert in test construction who evaluated the process of item construction and provided suggestions for the

questionnaire format. Based on feedback from these individuals, ten questions were eliminated and several were reworded to enhance clarity.

A final 40 item questionnaire was then constructed. Subjects were asked to indicate level of agreement with each item on a Likert-type scale which included the following six options; strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix C.

Demographic Questionnaire

A 13 item questionnaire was designed by the researcher to assess a number of demographic variables including; sex, age, ethnicity, marital status, urban/rural status, educational level, income level, level of financial hardship, and contribution of the lost job to the household economy.

The information provided was coded and used to determine whether the sample is reflective of the population. The demographic variables of age, gender, education and economic class and economic deprivation variables of financial hardship and contribution were also tested to determine their relationship to job loss impact. A copy of the form appears in Appendix D.

Pilot Study

A small pilot study was conducted by the researcher on three individuals who met the sample criteria. Data collection for the pilot study began August 19, 1994, immediately following approval of the study

by the Department of Educational Psychology Ethical Review Committee at the University of Alberta.

Three subjects participated in the pilot study. All three were provided with a complete mail-out package including; instructions (Appendix E), a participant information form (Appendix F), a participant consent form (Appendix G), a support resources form (Appendix H) and all four objective measures. Verbal feedback regarding appropriateness, relevance, readability and clarity, was requested from the respondents upon completion of reading or filling out each document. The respondents indicated no problems or difficulties with the material and no changes or improvements were suggested. Due to the small pilot sample size, no data analysis was performed on the answers provided. This data was not included in the formal study.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the formal study was collected during the ten week period between August 22, 1994 and October 31, 1994 using a mail out technique. An initial contact was made by telephone to explain the nature and purpose of the study, and evaluate whether the individual met the study criteria. The 61 individuals who agreed to participate were mailed a package containing instructions, an information form, a consent form, a support resources form and the four questionnaires.

In order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, all sets of questionnaires were given a nonidentifying code. Separate return envelopes were provided for the consent form, which required a signature, and the coded questionnaires. This method ensured that it was

not possible, even for the researcher, to determine which data belonged to which participant.

Of the 61 packages sent to participants, 53 were returned, resulting in an 87% response rate. Scoring of the data revealed that three sets of data were not useable due to large numbers of unanswered questions. The remaining 50 sets of data comprised the sample for this study.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed with the aid of two computer programs. Initially, the data was keyed into an MTS system and the SPSS-X program was used to perform the Lilliefors test. This test is based on a modification of the Kolmogorov-Smirnoff test for homogeneity of variance. It revealed that the sample for this study is not different than the general population and is suitable for statistical tests which assume a normal distribution. The remainder of the data analysis was performed using SYSTAT 5.0.

In order to test research question number one, scattergrams of the relationships between job loss impact and the demographic variables of age, gender, education and economic class were plotted to determine linearity. No curvilinearity was detected and Point Biserial and Biserial correlations were used to test each of the four variables. An analysis of variance was then performed comparing age groups on job loss impact. A Tukey test was then performed to evaluate the differences between the means of the age groups.

Scattergrams of the relationships between job loss impact and the economic deprivation variables of estimated financial hardship and contribution of lost job to the household economy were plotted to

determine linearity. As no curvilinearity was detected, research question number two was tested using Biserial correlations. An independent T-test comparing financial hardship groups on job loss impact was then performed.

Scattergrams were again plotted to determine the linearity of the relationships between job loss and the identity variables of identity status and job involvement. As there was no evidence of curvilinearity, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to test research question number three.

Finally, research question number four, regarding gender differences on the identity variables of ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status and job involvement, was tested using Analysis of Variance.

In order to enhance clarity of research results, scales have been adjusted so that all correlations shown are positive. Chosen significance level for this study was set at .05. It is suggested that this value provides a good compromise between accepting false relationships and rejecting valid relationships in behavioral research as measurement tends to be less precise (Welkowitz, Ewen, and Cohen, 1982).

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was descriptive in nature and designed to explore potential relationships. The intent was to gather information on the group of people currently facing job loss in and around Edmonton, rather than trying to construct a group reflecting population norms who had also lost a job. As a result, no attempt was made to control for age, gender, ethnicity, urban/rural residence, education or marital status. A limitation

of this approach was overrepresentation of Caucasians, females, and urban dwellers in the sample, which decreased the generalizability of the results.

Participation in the study was delimited by two factors. Subjects were required to be adults who had been laid off within the last 12 months. Two limitations resulted from this approach. The first is that no comparison between differing lengths of time between the layoff and participation were possible, as the subjects were treated as one group. Examining the experiences of individuals laid off for 3 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 12 months, for example, may well have generated different results. A second limitation is that individuals who had quit their jobs or who had been fired were excluded from the study. As the circumstances between these groups differ, comparison between them may have proved interesting.

Another delimitation involved occupation. As the sample size was expected to fall between 50 and 100 participants, no attempt was made to compare results along occupational lines. It was felt that the sample would be too small to support this type of analysis.

Finally, this study was delimited in terms of identity measurement. Identity is a complex, value-laden theoretical concept. Little agreement exists concerning what it is and is not, let alone how it may best be measured. It was decided that investigation of identity issues in this study would be confined to objective instruments which find a degree of theoretical and practical support in the literature. Therefore, the EOM-EIS-2 (Pennion, Adams, and Huh, 1989) and Lodahl and Kenjer's (1965) measure of Job Involvement were used to assess identity. These are by no means the only ways in which identity could have been evaluated, and it is possible that the use of different measures may have produced different

results. A limitation of this study, then, is that identity was tested in relation to job loss impact only insofar as it is defined by the two measures selected.

Three additional limitations may stem from the measurement instruments used in this study. First, the EOM-EIS-2 was not designed specifically for use with an adult population. Validation samples in the construction of this test included individuals from the ages of 14 to 56. Subjects in this study ranged in age from 20 to 52 and are within the validation range, but the optimal age range suggested for the use of this test is between 15 and 30 years. Second, norms were unavailable for the measure of job loss impact constructed for use in this study. Further test development may well have increased the power of this instrument, and therefore, confidence in the results. The third consideration involves the construction and standardization of the EOM-EIS-2 and Lodahl and Kenjer's (1965) measure of job involvement using information gathered on American populations. It is unknown to what degree if any Americans may differ from Canadians in terms identity status and job involvement.

A final limitation in this study may also involve the method of data collection used. All data were collected through self-report instruments. It was assumed that the information provided in these reports was honest and accurate. It was also assumed that subjects had the necessary reading and comprehension skills to answer the items appropriately. The degree to which these assumptions may be true is unknown and is a limitation of this data gathering method. However, it was believed that the use of self-reports would provide objective data and help reduce observer bias.

Chapter IV

Results

The results of the research are presented in this chapter beginning with a detailed description of the sample involved. Next, summaries of the remaining variables of interest are presented. Finally, the four research questions are restated followed by relevant statistical analyses and appropriate conclusions.

Demographic Information

A total of 50 subjects participated in this study. Frequencies and percentages of each sample demographic variable are presented in Table 3. The results were obtained through the Demographic Information form which appears in Appendix D.

Table 3

Data Summary of Demographic Variables

Variable	Frequency	%
Gender		
Females	35	70
Males	15	30
Residence Status		
Urban	49	98
Rural	1	2

Table 3 - continued

Variable	Frequency	%
Age (Years)		
20-29	15	30
30-39	16	32
40+	19	38
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	48	96
Black	1	2
Asian	1	2
Marital Status		
Single	17	34
Married	22	44
Common-law	7	14
Separated	1	2
Divorced	3	6
Education (Years)		
12-15	19	38
16 +	31	62
Individual Income/Year		
$5-20 000	13	26
$20-30 000	19	38
$30-40 000	9	18
$40 000 +	9	18

As can be seen in Table 3 this is largely an urban (98%), Caucasian (96%), female (70%), highly educated (62%) sample. The majority (58%) of subjects have a life partner while 34% are single and only 8% separated or divorced. Most subjects earned $20-30 000/year (38%) while 26% earned $5-20 000/year. Earning of $30-40 000/year and $40-50 000/year were each reported by 18 % of subjects. More equal representation is found in terms of age with roughly the same number of subjects in the 20-29, 30-39 and 40+ years categories.

Economic Deprivation

Economic deprivation was a potential moderator of job loss impact chosen to be evaluated in this study. For the current purposes, two aspects of economic deprivation were examined. The first was contribution of the lost job to the household economy. This was defined as the proportion of the family income which had previously been provided through the lost job. Subjects were asked to estimate this amount by selecting a percentage which closest reflected their circumstances. Possible choices included 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% (see question 8 in Appendix D). For the purposes of analysis, subjects reporting 25% and 50% were grouped into a 50% and less category while those reporting 75% and 100% were grouped into a greater than 50% category.

The second aspect of economic deprivation examined was financial hardship. This was determined by asking participants to estimate the level of negative economic impact generated by the job loss. Possible choices included none, low, moderate, severe and very severe (see question 12 in Appendix D). For analytical purposes subjects reporting none, low and moderate impact were defined as belonging to the moderate impact group.

Subjects reporting severe and very severe impact were defined as belonging to the severe impact group. Table 4 provides frequencies and percentages of contribution and financial hardship as they occur in the sample.

Table 4

Data Summary of Economic Deprivation Variables

Variable	Frequency	%
Contribution		
50% and less	25	50
Greater than 50%	25	50
Financial Hardship		
Moderate	21	42
Severe	29	58

Identity Variables

Two measures of identity were used in this study. The first was the EOM-EIS-2 which provides information on an individual's identity status (see Appendix A). Three types of identity status were investigated in relation to job loss impact including ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status and combined identity achievement status. Possible scores on ideological identity achievement status and interpersonal identity achievement status range from 8 to 48. Combined identity achievement status is a composite of ideological and interpersonal identity achievement status and possible scores range from

16 to 96. Results on this test may be used in two ways, as raw scores or as discreet statuses. When statuses are used, a score of 38 or greater is required to be considered *Achieved* in the ideological and interpersonal areas, and a score of 73 is required to be considered *Achieved* in the combined area. Since the goal of this study was to examine potential correlational relationships between identity status and job loss impact, raw scores were used for the purposes of analysis.

The second identity measure used in this study was Lodahl and Kenjer's (1965) Job Involvement measure (see Appendix B). It evaluates the relative amount of identity an individual has invested in a job. Possible scores on this measure range from 20 to 80. Lower scores on this test are indicative of higher job involvement. In order to simplify comparison, the scores were flipped prior to analysis so that higher scores are indicative of higher levels of job involvement in this study.

Table 5 provides the mean scores, standard deviations, minimum scores (lowest) and maximum scores (highest) for each identity variable under investigation as is found in the sample. These include ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status, combined identity achievement status and job involvement.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum (low) and Maximum (high) Scores of Ideological Identity Achievement Status, Interpersonal Identity Achievement Status, Combined Identity Achievement Status and Job Involvement

	Mean	S. D.	Min.	Max.
Ideological	31.66	5.26	20	43
Interpersonal	32.38	4.89	25	48
Combined	64.04	8.30	46	82
Job Involvement	51.42	5.20	42	60

Job Loss Impact

The final variable of interest is job loss impact. An instrument was constructed by the researcher for the purposes of objectively measuring the magnitude of negative impact experienced by an individual following a job loss (see Appendix C). It was based on a wide range of previously reported effects of job loss which are presented in detail in Chapter 3. Possible scores which can be obtained on this measure range from 40 to 240 with lower scores reflecting higher levels of negative impact. In order to simplify comparison, the scores were flipped prior to analysis so that higher scores are indicative of higher levels of job involvement in this study. The sample mean for this variable was 141.34 with a standard deviation of 36.97. The minimum score reported was 69 and the maximum score was 214.

Research Question Number One

What is the relationship between response to job loss and the demographic variables of age, gender, education and economic class (income)?

In order to answer question one job loss impact needed to be compared to each of the four demographic variables. Job loss impact is a continuous variable. This means that job loss impact scores could theoretically take on any value within a certain range. Gender is a dichotomous variable, meaning that an individual can only be one or the other, male or female. Age, education and income are continuous variables. However, prior to analysis, these three variables were logically grouped so that comparisons within each of the variables could be enhanced through the use of approximately equal cells. Age was broken down into three ranges including 20-29 years, 30-39 years and 40+ years. Education was divided into two groups of 12-15 years and 16+ years. Income was split into four ranges including $5-20 000, $20-30 000, $30-40 000 and $40 000+. Because these demographic variables were grouped, and the values of the results artificially restricted to few categories, they were treated as dichotomous variables for analytical purposes.

Point Biserial correlation is the statistical test required to analyze the relationship between a continuous variable and a true dichotomous variable. Therefore, a Point Biserial correlation was calculated between job loss impact and gender. The result was a correlation coefficient of .08 which is not significant at the .05 confidence level.

Biserial Correlation is the statistical test required to analyze the relationship between a continuous variable and a variable which is not truly dichotomous, but is treated as such for analytical purposes.

Therefore, Point Biserial correlations were performed between job loss impact and age, education and income. The correlations are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Correlation Coefficients For the Variables of Job Loss Impact (Impact), Age, Education, and Income

	Impact	Age	Gender	Education	Income
Impact	-				
Age	.28 *	-			
Education	.01	.08	.24	-	
Income	-.11	.09	.20	.29 *	-

* $p < .05$

On the basis of these results it can be concluded that a significant positive relationship exists between the demographic variable of age and job loss impact. No statistically significant relationship was detected between job loss impact and the two remaining demographic variables.

The significant positive correlation between age and job loss impact indicates that as age increases negative job loss impact increases. What this result does not reveal is if a difference in job loss impact scores occurred between the three age groupings investigated. Analysis of Variance is the statistical test required to evaluate differences between multiple means. The primary advantage of this test is that it compensates for the increasing error rate which would normally occur with multiple comparisons. Since the variable of age was grouped into three levels, 20-

29 years, 30-39 years and 40+ years, an Analysis of Variance was performed to see if all age levels were equally affected by job loss impact. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Analysis of Variance Comparing Age Groups on Job Loss Impact

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Prob.
Age	2	10564.12	5282.06		
				4.40	0.02
Error	47	56423.10	1200.50		
Total	49	66987.22	6482.56		

As can be observed from Table 7, a significant difference in job loss impact was found among the three age categories analyzed. However, based on Analysis of Variance results alone, it is not possible to determine where differences between groups lie. A post hoc test was required in order to evaluate all pairwise differences for significance, while, at the same time, limiting the error rate. The Tukey test is commonly used for this purpose. It allows a researcher to compare the differences between group means to detect where significant differences occur. The mean job loss impact scores for the three age groups were 136.20 (Group 1), 125.13 (Group 2) and 159.05 (Group 3). A Tukey test was performed to detect significant differences between the means of the three age categories. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Tukey Test Comparing Age Groups on Job Loss Impact

Comparison	Mean Difference	Probability
Group 1 vs. Group 2	-11.08	0.65
Group 1 vs. Group 3	22.85	0.15
Group 2 vs. Group 3	33.93	0.02 *

The mean job loss impact score of the 40+ group is observed to be 33.93 points higher than the mean job loss impact score of 30-39 year old group. The conclusion which may be drawn from the Tukey test results is that the mean difference between the groups is statistically significant. Therefore, the older individuals in group 3 experienced significantly greater negative job loss impact than the younger individuals in group 2.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between job loss impact and economic deprivation defined in terms of estimated financial hardship and contribution of lost job to the household economy?

In order to answer question two job loss impact needed to be compared to both economic deprivation variables. Financial hardship and contribution to household economy were grouped prior to analysis so that comparisons within each of the variables could be enhanced through the use of approximately equal cell sizes. Financial hardship was broken down into two levels, Moderate and Severe. Contribution to the

household economy was also divided into two groups, 50% and less and greater than 50%. Because these variables were grouped, and the values of the results artificially restricted to few categories, they were treated as dichotomous variables for analytical purposes. Job loss impact is a continuous variable which can theoretically take any value within a certain range. Biserial correlation is the statistical test required to determine relationships between continuous variables and variables which are treated as being dichotomous. Therefore, Biserial correlations were performed between job loss impact and both economic deprivation variables to assess potential relationships. The correlations are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Correlation Coefficients for the Variables of Job Loss Impact (Impact), Estimated Financial Hardship (Hardship) and Contribution of Lost Job to Household Economy (Contribution)

	Impact	Hardship	Contribution
Impact	-		
Hardship	.50 *	-	
Contribution	.19	.37 *	-

* $p < .05$

The conclusion which may be drawn from the results of Table 9 is that a significant positive relationship exists between financial hardship and job loss impact. Therefore, higher reported levels of perceived

financial distress were associated with higher reported levels of negative job loss impact. No statistically significant relationship was detected between job loss impact and the relative amount of money the lost job had contributed to the household economy.

The positive correlation indicates that job loss impact increases as financial hardship increases. However, this statistic does not indicate whether a significant difference occurs between the moderate and severe financial hardship groups and job loss impact. An additional test was needed to determine if the mean job loss impact score of the moderate group differs significantly from the mean job loss impact score of the severe group. An independent T test is commonly used to test for significance in the difference between two means. Therefore, an independent T test was performed comparing the means of the moderate and severe financial hardship groups. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Independent T-test Comparing Financial Hardship Groups on Job Loss Impact

Group	N	Mean	S. D.	t-value	p
1	21	119.76	29.11		
				4.02	0.00
2	29	156.97	34.42		

As can be observed from Table 10, a significant difference in job loss impact is found among the two financial hardship groups analyzed. Subjects in the severe financial hardship group, who classified the financial consequences of their job loss as severe or very severe, reported significantly higher levels of negative job loss impact than those in the moderate financial hardship group who reported moderate, low or no financial consequences.

Research Question Number 3

What is the relationship between job loss impact and the following identity variables; ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status, combined identity achievement status, and job involvement?

In order to answer question number three job loss impact needed to be compared with each identity variable. Job loss impact, ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status combined identity achievement status, and job involvement are all continuous variables which can theoretically take any value within a certain range. Pearson Product-Moment correlations is the statistical test required to analyze relationships between continuous variables. Therefore, Pearson Product-Moment correlations were performed between job loss impact and all four identity variables to assess potential relationships. The correlations are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Correlation Coefficients For the Variables of Job Loss Impact, Ideological Identity Achievement Status, Interpersonal Identity Achievement Status, Combined Identity Achievement Status, and Job Involvement

	Impact	Ideolog.	Interp.	Comb.	Job Invol.
Impact	-				
Ideolog.	-.15	-			
Interp.	-.36 *	.34 *	-		
Comb.	-.31 *	.83 *	.80 *	-	
Job Invol.	.27	.25	.21	.28 *	-

* $p < .05$

On the basis of these results it can be concluded that a significant negative relationship exists between job loss impact and both interpersonal identity achievement status and combined identity achievement status. Higher interpersonal and combined identity achievement status scores are related to lower levels of negative job loss impact. The variable of job involvement is approaching significance at the .05 confidence level and would be considered significant at the .10 confidence level. The relationship between job loss impact and ideological identity achievement status is not statistically significant.

Research Question Number 4

Is there a gender difference on the identity variables of ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status and job involvement?

In order to answer question number four males and females needed to be compared in terms of ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status and job involvement. When comparing the means of two groups, either an independent T test or an Analysis of Variance may be used to provide the same result. In the current study, Analysis of Variance was selected to compare gender on each of the identity variables on the basis of software compatibility. The results are presented in Tables 12a, 12b and 12c.

Table 12a

Analysis of Variance Comparing Gender on Ideological Identity Achievement Status

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Prob.
Gender	1	27.85	27.85		
				1.01	0.32
Error	48	1329.37	27.70		
Total	49	1357.22	55.55		

Table 12b

Analysis of Variance Comparing Gender on Interpersonal Identity Achievement Status

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Prob.
Gender	1	0.28	0.28		
				0.01	0.92
Error	48	1171.51	24.41		
Total	49	1171.79	24.69		

Table 12c

Analysis of Variance Comparing Gender on Job Involvement

Source	df	SS	MS	F	Prob.
Gender	1	0.51	0.51		
				0.02	0.89
Error	48	1327.68	27.66		
Total	49	1328.19	28.17		

On the basis of these results, it can be concluded that no significant gender differences exist in any of the three identity variables under investigation.

Summary

From the results it can be concluded that a relationship exists between job loss impact and age, financial hardship and interpersonal identity achievement status. Although job involvement was found to be approaching significance, no significant relationship was found to exist between the remaining variables and job loss impact. No significant gender differences were detected in terms of identity variables.

Quantitative research is an excellent tool which provides a wealth of objective information about an issue. However, even when the best available objective measures are used, it's scope is somewhat limited when examining complicated, emotionally charged topics. In the following chapter, an attempt is made to reach beyond the limits of the objective results provided by exploring information and clinical observations not included in the formal part of the study.

Chapter V

Discussion

In this chapter the four research questions are restated followed by a discussion of the relevant data and related clinical observations. Next, conclusions are drawn. Finally, implications, suggestions for future research and final comments are presented.

Research Question Number One

What is the relationship between response to job loss and the demographic variables of age, gender, education and economic class (income)?

Question one involved demographic variables which have all been suggested to be moderators of job loss impact. For the purposes of this study job loss impact was defined as the relative amount of negative effects experienced after losing a job.

The first demographic variable tested against job loss impact was age. Some evidence exists which suggests that increasing age heightens an individual's susceptibility to negative job loss effects (Kirsh, 1992). The results of this study seem to offer support for this conclusion. For this sample, a significant positive correlation of .28 was found to exist between age and job loss impact, meaning that higher levels of reported job loss impact occurred as the age of the subjects increased. Of the three age levels which were compared by job loss impact, only one significant difference was found. It occurred between the 30-39 year old group and the 40+ year old group with the older group experiencing greater job loss impact.

Although only one difference was statistically significant, an interesting pattern of job loss impact was observed among the age categories. The oldest subjects (40+) reported the highest levels of job loss impact followed by the youngest subjects (20-29) who reported the next highest levels. Moderately aged subjects (30-39) reported the lowest levels of job loss impact. A possible explanation for these results may involve perceived difficulties in obtaining new employment based on the relative amounts of education, experience and expectations about the future possessed by members of these three groups.

For individuals in the 20-29 year old group job loss may have been perceived as a threatening experience. While people in this group may possess the latest training available, they typically have limited practical experience to offer potential employers. During periods of high unemployment employers often have "their pick" of highly qualified people, which has the effect of restricting access into the job market for less experienced individuals. Therefore, job loss in the youngest group may be perceived as delaying access to meaningful work or as signifying a necessary lowering of expectations regarding the type of work which may be realistically obtained.

Comments made by a female participant, "Debbie", in her early twenties may help support these conclusions. Debbie indicated that she had been unable to secure even entry level employment in her chosen career since being laid off. She suggested that her difficulties stemmed from having to compete against people with Masters degrees and years of experience for jobs which would normally go to people fresh out of school.

Subjects in the 30-39 year old category may have experienced job loss as less of a threat as they have fewer impediments to reemployment.

These individuals often have the dual advantage of years of experience coupled with an education which is not out of date. During periods of high unemployment employers may be most favorably disposed toward this group, as the considerable knowledge and experience of these individuals can often be obtained for less pay and benefits than would ordinarily be required. People in this age range are also young enough to start over in a new company, or career, without seriously compromising retirement security as they can expect to work an additional 26 to 35 years.

These conclusions are illustrated in comments made by a professional female participant, "Ann", in her mid thirties. She indicated strong belief in the marketability of her skills and experience. Her two greatest concerns stemming from the layoff were the loss of benefits which come from having seniority in an organization, and starting at the bottom of the pay scale in any new job she would obtain. Reemployment was not one of her concerns.

Participants in the 40+ years category experienced the greatest amount of job loss impact. Losing a job may have been highly threatening for people in this group as they may face the greatest obstacles to reemployment and profound consequences in terms of future security. Many older workers have a great deal of experience but dated educations. Many also do not have the technological skills demanded by employers today. This is a particular problem for those who perform jobs which no longer exist due to technological advancements. An additional impediment to reemployment is employer attitude. Many older people are discriminated against in terms of hiring. Employers often overlook older workers believing that they have less to offer than their younger counterparts. An additional problem for the older worker is that many

may have been counting on the high earning potential of their remaining working years to provide retirement security. These factors may combine to make job loss a particularly devastating experience within this group.

The experiences of a male participant in his late forties, "Roy", may lend support to these conclusions. Roy was employed with the same manufacturing company for over twenty years. He was laid off as the company switched to increasing automation to save money. He is unable to find a similar job as many companies are going through the same transition. He finds himself with outdated skills and unable to upgrade to find a different job because of unemployment insurance benefit restrictions. He is devastated because he has been paying into the company retirement fund for twenty years and was counting on it for his future. Roy commented that losing his job is the single worst experience he has faced in his life.

Three other demographic variables in addition to age were tested against job loss impact. They included gender, education and economic class (income). For this sample, no significant relationship was detected between job loss impact and these three variables. The lack of significant relationships in these three areas may be of great interest in terms of what may be reflected concerning current attitudes and social conditions.

In the literature, work issues have been approached mainly from a male perspective as work has traditionally been viewed as playing a greater role in the lives of men. As a result, investigation into the effects of job loss on women has been largely, and perhaps unfairly, neglected (Macky & Haines, 1982). The current study suggests that there is no gender difference in terms of reported job loss impact. This seems to support the position of Warr (1982) who suggests that changing social roles have

resulted in equal importance of career issues to men and women in the labour market. Although there was no significant difference in reported job loss impact between men and women in the current study, unequal gender representation in the sample indicates that caution must be used in interpreting the results.

It is also interesting that education and economic class proved not to be significantly related to job loss impact. There is some evidence to suggest that having more education and a higher income has previously offered a measure of protection from negative job loss effects (Kirsh, 1992). The results of this study indicate that this may no longer be the case. In terms of education, the lack of a protective effect may be due to the fact that an advanced education no longer guarantees a job in today's economy. This conclusion must be tempered by the knowledge that individuals with less than a high school education were not represented in the sample.

Why higher income may have failed to moderate job loss impact is less clear. A plausible explanation for this result may have been provided by one of the participants. Although "Bill" had been making more than forty thousand dollars a year prior to being laid off, he was experiencing terrible financial distress. He indicated that the more he made the more he was tempted to spend. As a result he had been living slightly beyond his means when employed. The social safety net only provides up to 2/3 of the lost income, and in Bill's case, this simply was not enough to make ends meet. It is likely that Bill is not atypical in this regard.

Research Question Number Two

What is the relationship between job loss impact and economic deprivation defined in terms of estimated financial hardship and contribution of the lost job to the household economy?

Economic deprivation has been suggested to be a moderator of job loss impact (Kirsh, 1992). A comprehensive economic assessment was beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, in order to get an indication of economic deprivation, subjects were asked to make two estimates. The first involved contribution of the lost job to the household economy which was defined as the percentage of family income previously provided by the lost job. The second involved financial hardship defined as the relative amount of negative financial impact experienced by the family following job loss.

Based on the estimates provided, a significant positive correlation of .50 was detected between job loss impact and financial hardship. A significant relationship between job loss impact and contribution to the household economy was not detected. For this sample, higher levels of perceived hardship were related to higher levels of job loss impact even though the relative amount of money contributed to the household appeared to be unrelated. From these results it would appear that the importance of the money to the family's daily functioning was more relevant than the absolute magnitude of the contribution when evaluating the negative impact of the loss.

A point which may merit closer examination is the strength of the correlation between financial hardship and job loss impact. The correlation of .50 between these two variables was the single largest relationship detected in this study. This is of interest because the recent

trend in the job loss literature is a move away from basic issues such as finances toward more abstract issues such as identity. Much of this shift seems to be fueled by the changing demographics of the unemployed and by the current existence of social safety nets in several countries around the world.

Based on the results of this study, it would appear that financial consequences continue to play a substantial role in terms of how job loss is perceived. The social safety net is only more or less successful in helping individuals meet their needs as it was never designed to replace an earned income. In the current study, many subjects reported a need to drastically alter their lifestyles in order to cope with new financial realities. One participant, who had successfully supported her chosen lifestyle for years, reported suffering great distress as a result of her financial limitations. She indicated that even if a support group for unemployed individuals existed, she would lack the bus fare needed to attend. Taken together, it appears that it may not be wise to overlook the threat such circumstances may pose to the self-esteem and well being of any individual, including the white collar worker.

Research Question Number Three

What is the relationship between job loss impact and the following identity variables; ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status, combined identity achievement status, and job involvement?

As identity has been suggested to be a strong potential moderator of unemployment effects (Warr, 1978; Leana & Feldman, 1992, Swinburne, 1981; Peregoy & Schliebner, 1990) two aspects of identity, identity status

and identity investment in a particular job, were tested in relation to job loss impact. The EOM-EIS-2, which provides identity status scores, was used to measure the degree of identity development achieved by the participants. A measure of job involvement was used to obtain an indication of the amount of identity subject's had invested in the job from which they had been laid off.

Three types of identity achievement status were examined in this study. The first, ideological identity achievement status, is comprised of four subscales measuring the development of identity in the areas of occupation, religion politics and philosophy. Surprisingly, no significant relationship was detected between ideological identity achievement status and job loss impact. Higher scores on this portion of the EOM-EIS-2 reflect greater commitment to ideals in each of the four ideological areas including occupation. It was expected that individuals who were more committed to occupational ideals and placed greater value on the meaning and importance of work would be more negatively affected by job loss than those who were less committed.

A possible explanation for this unexpected result may involve unequal gender representation in the sample. Difficulties exist in interpreting identity status results in female populations as identity status measures are derived from Erik Erikson's original male oriented theory of identity development. It has been suggested that women are more likely to base their identities on the establishment and maintenance of social relationships (Marcia, 1980), and therefore, higher scores in the interpersonal identity achievement status area can be expected in female populations. This does not mean, however, that occupational issues are unimportant to female identity development. Blisker, Scheidel and

Marcia (1988) determined that occupational issues contributed equally to the identity status of men and women even though the interpersonal identity area is more predictive of female identity status. It is therefore likely that a relationship may exist between occupational identity development and job loss impact, but that measurement difficulties and substantial overrepresentation of females in the sample may have combined to mask the strength of the effect.

Interpersonal identity achievement status is comprised of four subscales measuring the development of identity in the areas of friendship, dating, sex roles and recreation. A significant negative correlation of .36 was detected between interpersonal identity achievement status and job loss impact. Thus higher levels of interpersonal identity status were related to lower levels of job loss impact. This result agreed with experimenter expectation. Individuals who are more committed to interpersonal ideals place greater value on the meaning and importance of social relationships. As a result it is likely that they spend a greater proportion of their time developing these relationships which may be valuable sources of support in times of crisis. It seems reasonable, therefore, that those individuals who have multiple sources of access to emotional, financial, and job finding support may perceive job loss as less threatening than those forced to rely solely on the Government social safety net alone.

Again, some caution must be used in accepting the current results because of unequal gender representation on the sample. It is possible that the large number of female subjects produced a stronger relationship between interpersonal identity achievement status and job loss impact that would have been observed in a sample with equal gender groups.

Combined identity achievement status was the last form of identity status under investigation. It is a composite status comprised of all four ideological and all four interpersonal identity subscales. It too was found to be significantly negatively related to job loss impact with a correlation between the two of -.31. Therefore, higher combined identity achievement scores were related to lower job loss impact scores, though the large contribution from the interpersonal area greatly influenced this relationship. Because this value is subject to influence by high scores in one area, it is not recommended that combined identity achievement scores be used in evaluating job loss impact.

These results provided through the use of the EOM-EIS-2 are intriguing, but some additional caution in interpreting them is advised. The EOM-EIS-2 was not designed specifically for use with an adult population. Validation samples in the construction of this test included individuals from the ages of 14 to 56. Subjects in this study ranged in age from 20 to 52 and are within the validation range, but the optimal age range suggested for the use of this test is between 15 and 30 years. Therefore, the results obtained for this sample are somewhat suspect and their value may not lie so much in their generalizability, as in providing an indication of the worth of pursuing this avenue of research.

Job involvement was the last identity variable to be examined in relation to job loss impact. Job involvement scores were obtained through the use of Lodahl and Kenjer's (1965) job involvement measure. A correlation of .27 was obtained between job involvement and job loss impact scores. This correlation closely approached significance at the .05 confidence level. However, a reduced confidence level of .10 would have to be adopted in order for the correlation to be considered significant. For

this sample, the magnitude of the relationship between job involvement and job loss impact is small and cannot be considered as important as some of the relationships already reported.

This result was not anticipated given the significant positive relationship between job involvement and job loss impact detected in several other studies (Warr, 1978; Warr, Cook & Wall, 1979; Stafford, Jackson & banks, 1980; Leana & Feldman, 1992). Therefore, a further comparison was made between the sample scores and the norms provided by Lodahl and Kenjer (1965). It was found that the uncorrected sample mean of 48.58 and standard deviation of 5.21 most closely resembled the norms reported for students with a mean of 48.06 and a standard deviation of 9.56. As lower scores are indicative of higher involvement on this test, it can be seen that individuals in this sample possess *lower* job involvement than the students in the norming group. As a comparison, nurses were found to have a mean involvement score of 43.37 and engineers a mean score of 42.62.

Job involvement scores of this nature are not supported by clinical observations made over the course of the study. During contact with participants, many indicated highly valuing the job from which they had been laid off. Comments were frequently made regarding fears of being unable to obtain new jobs from which they would derive similar satisfaction. A possible reason why the results did not reflect comments made by participants may involve psychological defenses used to cope with threatening experiences. It is believed that participants were very open and honest with the researcher regarding the deep feelings they possessed in regard to losing their jobs, as a safe, sympathetic environment had been created in which they could freely express their concerns. The

typical lag between initial contact with participants and receipt of the completed questionnaires was two to three weeks. It seems reasonable that over time, individuals may need to repress or deny such intense feelings in order to remain functional in the face of crisis. It is strongly suspected that different results would have been obtained had individuals participated in the study immediate following the discussion of their situation, as feelings about their experiences may have been much more salient at that time.

Research Question Number Four

Is there a gender difference on the identity variables of ideological identity achievement status, interpersonal identity achievement status and job involvement?

Because gender has been indicated to be an important component in identity research (Marcia, 1980; Macky & Haines, 1982; Warr, 1982) males and females were compared on ideological identity achievement status scores, interpersonal identity achievement status scores and job involvement scores. Analysis of Variance was calculated to compare the genders on each identity variable. Significant gender differences were not detected on any of the three variables.

It would be exciting if these results could be taken at face value as they seem to signify a social shift in terms of the importance of ideological identity and career issues among women and interpersonal identity issues among men. However, uncritical acceptance of these results may pose a serious problem due to vastly unequal gender representation in the sample. The sectors which have most affected by layoffs in Edmonton over the last year include education, health care, and government support

services. Historically, female workers have been overrepresented in these occupational areas which may in part account for the presence of twice as many female as male participants in the current study.

It seems likely that such a large gender disparity may have the effect of masking any true differences which might occur. Additional testing would seem to be required comparing equal numbers of men and women on these three identity variables before the current results could be accepted with any degree of confidence.

Conclusions

The experience of job loss in this sample was found to be related to three variables; age, economic hardship, and interpersonal identity achievement status. The older the subject and the greater the perceived financial hardship, the greater the reported level of job loss impact. Conversely, subjects with higher interpersonal identity achievement status scores reported lower job loss impact scores.

Implications

The goal of this study was to examine the effect of job loss under today's social and economic conditions. Large numbers of white collar workers have been dismissed through government cutbacks and industry downsizing in a climate of greatly limited job prospects. It was expected that the experience of this group may be different than past groups, particularly as related to issues of identity.

Interestingly, although highly educated, this sample was not found to be particularly invested in their work and job involvement was not found to be related to job loss impact. Ideological identity achievement

status was also unrelated to the effect of job loss. The variable which was most related to a negative response to job loss was perceived financial hardship. Age was also related though not as strongly. Higher levels of interpersonal identity achievement status were related to lower job loss impact suggesting that a strong foundation of social and interpersonal relationships may help buffer the negative effects of losing a job.

To the degree that the results can be accepted as valid, the implications for counselling and aiding individuals currently experiencing a job loss may be best focused on three factors. First, financial aid. Help in accessing social programs and funds coupled with debt management and budgeting skills may be highly beneficial. In terms of age, two strategies may be useful. The first is support for the experience and knowledge the individual has gained over the years as a benefit that can be offered to a potential employer. The second is connecting the individual with organizations which specialize in helping the older worker find employment. Finally, aid in developing stronger social supports and relationships may be of benefit.

Suggestions for Future Research

Were further investigation of the relationship between job loss impact and the moderators tested in this study attempted, a number of strategies would be suggested in terms of overcoming the limitations of the current approach. Initial suggestions involve the selection of the sample. Without question, use of a random sample would greatly enhance the generalizability of results. However, as a random sample may not be practical, it is recommended that future samples attempt to closer approximate the general population. Inclusion of a larger number

of noncaucasians, rural dwellers, individuals between 53 and 65 years of age, and individuals with less than high school education is advised. Equal gender representation is also strongly recommended.

A number of delimitations regarding the sample would also be suggested. First, it may be beneficial to restrict participation to those who had lost a job in the last six months as their experiences may remain more salient. It is also recommended that length of time since job loss be evaluated to determine if differences occur between those newly unemployed and those who have coped with job loss for a period of time. In addition, it is recommended that the selection of subjects not be delimited by nature of the job loss. Interesting information may be obtained by comparing those who have been laid off to those who have quit or been fired from a job.

Finally, four suggestions would be offered in terms of methodological considerations. First, it is recommended that additional test development be conducted on the objective measure used to evaluate job loss impact. Administration of this test to a large number of individuals followed by item analysis may greatly enhance the power of the results. Second, a more in-depth economic analysis is suggested. For example, it may be helpful to calculate the monthly financial deficit experienced following a job loss and compare this value to job loss impact. Thirdly, it may be helpful to supplement identity investigation through the use of semi-structured interview questions which specifically deal with the potential connection between job loss and identity. Finally, it is also recommended that all data be collected face to face in a safe environment so that an individual's most authentic responses may be obtained.

Final Comments

The purpose of this study was to examine factors which may moderate the effects of job loss under current social and economic conditions. Recent literature has suggested that the experience of job loss may be changing due to the existence of a social safety net and greater numbers of white collar workers facing layoffs. As such, there has been a move away from research of basic issues such as finances toward more abstract issues such as identity, Potential moderators of job loss impact chosen to be evaluated in the current study included age, gender, education, income, economic deprivation, job involvement and identity achievement status. The results obtained provide little support for the suggestion that the experience of job loss may be changing. The factor which was associated with the greatest levels of negative job loss impact was economic deprivation. Increasing age was also related to a more negative experience of job loss. Higher levels of interpersonal identity achievement status, on the other hand, were associated with lower levels of negative job loss impact. Based on the results of the current study it would appear that, at least for now, job loss remains a basic threat despite changing demographics and a social safety net.

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Appendix A

The Revised Extended Version of the Objective Measure of ego Identity Status

The Revised Extended Version of the Objective

Measure of ego Identity Status

Instructions: Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your thoughts and feelings. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement as a whole. Indicate your answer on the line preceding the question number.

1 = strongly agree
2 = moderately agree
3 = agree
4 = disagree
5 = moderately disagree
6 = strongly disagree

_____1. I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, I'm just working at whatever is available until something better comes along.

_____2. When it comes to religion, I just haven't found anything that appeals and I don't really feel I need to look.

_____3. My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents'. What has worked for them will obviously work for me.

_____4. There's no single "life style" which appeals to me more than another.

_____5. There's a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me.

_____6. I sometimes join in recreational activities when asked, but I rarely try anything on my own.

_____7. I haven't really thought about a "dating style". I'm not too concerned whether I date, or not.

_____8. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But I do think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.

_____9. I'm still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what jobs will be right for me.

For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = strongly agree
2 = moderately agree
3 = agree
4 = disagree
5 = moderately disagree
6 = strongly disagree

_____10. I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.

_____11. There are so many ways to divide responsibilities in marriage, I'm trying to decide what will work for me.

_____12. I'm looking for an acceptable perspective for my own "lifestyle" view, but I haven't found it yet.

_____13. There are many reasons for friendship, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.

_____14. While I don't have one recreational activity I'm really committed to, I'm experiencing numerous leisure outlets to identify one I can truly enjoy.

_____15. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.

_____16. I haven't really considered politics. It just doesn't excite me much.

_____17. I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there's never really been any question since my parents said what they wanted.

_____18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.

_____19. I'm not ready to start thinking about how married couples should divide up family responsibilities yet.

_____20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "lifestyle" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.

_____21. My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends.

For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = strongly agree
2 = moderately agree
3 = agree
4 = disagree
5 = moderately disagree
6 = strongly disagree

_____22. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly from lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.

_____23. I don't think about dating much. I just kind of take it as it comes.

_____24. I guess I'm pretty much like my folks when it comes to politics. I follow what they do in terms of voting and such.

_____25. I'm not really interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.

_____26. I'm not so sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done looking yet.

_____27. My ideas about men's and women's roles come right from my parents and family. I haven't seen any need to look further.

_____28. My own views on a desirable life style were taught to me by my parents and I don't see any need to question what they taught me.

_____29. I don't have any real close friends, and I don't think I'm looking for one right now.

_____30. Sometimes I join in leisure activities, but I really don't see a need to look for a particular activity to do regularly.

_____31. I'm trying out different types of dating relationships. I just haven't decided what is best for me.

_____32. There are so many different political parties and ideals. I can't decide which to follow until I figure it all out.

_____33. It took me a while to figure out, but now I really know what I want for a career.

_____34. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.

For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = strongly agree
2 = moderately agree
3 = agree
4 = disagree
5 = moderately disagree
6 = strongly disagree

_____35. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's roles in marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.

_____36. In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self-exploration.

_____37. I only pick friends my parents would approve of.

_____38. I've always liked doing the same recreational activities my parents do and haven't ever seriously considered anything else.

_____39. I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date.

_____40. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.

_____41. My parents decided a long time ago what I should go into for employment and I'm following their plans.

_____42. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.

_____43. I've been thinking about the roles that husbands and wives play a lot these days, and I'm trying to make a final decision.

_____44. My parents' views on life are good enough for me, I don't need anything else.

_____45. I've tried many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.

_____46. After trying a lot of different recreational activities I've found one or more I really enjoy doing by myself or with friends.

_____47. My preferences about dating are still in the process of developing. I haven't fully decided yet.

For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = strongly agree
2 = moderately agree
3 = agree
4 = disagree
5 = moderately disagree
6 = strongly disagree

_____48. I'm not sure about my political beliefs, but I'm trying to figure out what I can truly believe in.

_____49. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.

_____50. I attend the same church my family has always attended. I've never really questioned why.

_____51. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I've thought about lots of ways and now I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.

_____52. I guess I just kind of enjoy life in general, and I don't see myself living by any particular viewpoint to life.

_____53. I don't have any close friends. I just like to hang around with the crowd.

_____54. I've been experiencing a variety of recreational activities in hopes of finding one or more I can enjoy for some time to come.

_____55. I've dated different types of people and now know exactly what my own "unwritten rules" for dating are and who I will date.

_____56. I really have never been involved in politics enough to have made a firm stand one way or the other.

_____57. I just can't decide what to do for an occupation. There are so many that have possibilities.

_____58. I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my parents it must be right for me.

_____59. Opinions on men's and women's roles seem so varied that I don't think much about it.

_____60. After a lot of self-examination I have established a very definite view on what my own lifestyle will be.

For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = strongly agree
2 = moderately agree
3 = agree
4 = disagree
5 = moderately disagree
6 = strongly disagree

_____61. I really don't know what kind of friend is best for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what friendship means to me.

_____62. All my recreational preferences I got from my parents and I haven't really tried anything else.

_____63. I date only people my parents would approve of.

_____64. My folks have always had their political and moral beliefs about issues like abortion and mercy killing and I've always gone along accepting what they have.

Appendix B

Job Involvement Measure

Job Involvement Measure

Instructions: Read each item carefully and indicate the degree to which it reflects your own thoughts and feelings. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement as a whole. Indicate your answer by selecting one of the following responses and writing it on the line preceding the question.

1 = Strongly Agree
2 = Agree
3 = Disagree
4 = Strongly Disagree

_____1. I'll stay overtime to finish a job, even if I am not paid for it.
_____2. You can measure a person pretty well by how good a job he does.
_____3. The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job.
_____4. For me, mornings at work really fly by.
_____5. I usually show up for work a little early, to get things ready.
_____6. The most important things that happen to me involve my work.
_____7. Sometimes I lie awake at night thinking ahead to the next day's work.
_____8. I'm really a perfectionist about my work.
_____9. I feel depressed when I fail at something connected with my job.
_____10. I have other activities more important than my work.
_____11. I live, eat, and breathe my job.
_____12. I would probably keep working even if I didn't need the money.
_____13. Quite often I feel like staying home from work instead of coming in.
_____14. To me, my work is only a small part of who I am.
_____15. I am very much involved personally in my work.
_____16. I avoid taking on extra duties and responsibilities in my work.
_____17. I used to be more ambitious about my work than I am now.
_____18. Most things in life are more important than work.
_____19. I used to care more about my work, but now other things are more important to me.
_____20. Sometimes I'd like to kick myself for the mistakes I make in my work.

Appendix C

Job Loss Impact Assessment

Job Loss Impact Assessment

Instructions: Read each item carefully and indicate the degree to which it reflects your own thoughts, feelings and experiences since becoming laid off. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement as a whole. Indicate your answer by selecting one of the following responses and writing it on the line preceding the question.

1 = Strongly Agree	4 = Somewhat Disagree
2 = Agree	5 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat Agree	6 = Strongly Disagree

_____ 1. I often feel sad.
_____ 2. I use my time productively each day.
_____ 3. I was shocked to learn that I had been laid off.
_____ 4. I am as happy as I have always been.
_____ 5. Life is more stressful than it used to be.
_____ 6. I feel good about myself.
_____ 7. I often feel angry.
_____ 8. I look forward to each new day.
_____ 9. I am experiencing greater conflict in my family life.
_____10. I miss the interaction with others that used to be part of my daily work.
_____11. I feel as secure as I always have.
_____12. I have been experiencing a greater number of health problems/concerns.
_____13. I am not worried about having to change my standard of living.
_____14. My relationships are as happy as they have always been.
_____15. Sometimes I wonder if I would still have my job if I did things differently.
_____16. I take great pleasure in my daily activities.
_____17. I feel guilty about no longer having a job.
_____18. I am experiencing more mood shifts than usual.
_____19. I feel I contribute as much to the world as I used to.

For all the questions on this page, choose from the following responses.

1 = Strongly Agree	4 = Somewhat Disagree
2 = Agree	5 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat Agree	6 = Strongly Disagree

_____20. It takes more effort to get through the day.
_____21. I am often frustrated.
_____22. I am confident in the purpose of my life.
_____23. I resent having been laid off.
_____24. I have increased my use of alcohol/drugs to help me cope.
_____25. I feel as in control of my life as I used to.
_____26. When I was laid off, I had no idea what I should do.
_____27. I sometimes wonder if life is worth living.
_____28. I am satisfied with my life.
_____29. I feel let down by the system.
_____30. This experience has caused me to feel helpless sometimes.
_____31. I believe I will find a new job as satisfying as the old one.
_____32. I am more uncertain about the future than I used to be.
_____33. There has been no change in my sleeping habits.
_____34. I still take the same care with my health and grooming.
_____35. Sometimes I feel like just giving up.
_____36. I am worried about how I am going to pay all my bills.
_____37. At the end of the day, I often wonder if I have accomplished anything.
_____38. I do not question my choice of career.
_____39. It is nice to have help from others in planning my day.
_____40. Being laid off was very upsetting for me.

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions by filling in the space provided or by circling the letter beside your answer.

1. What is your sex?
   a. male
   b. female

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your ethnic background?
   a. Caucasian
   b. Asian
   c. Black
   d. Native American
   e. Other (please specify) _____

4. What is your marital status?
   a. single
   b. married
   c. common-law
   d. separated
   e. divorced
   f. widowed

5 What setting do you live in?
   a. urban
   b. rural

6. Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed.
   a. grade 9
   b. grade 10
   c. grade 11
   d. high school
   e. apprenticeship papers
   f. diploma
   g. baccalaureate degree
   h. masters/doctoral degree

7. What was your income range prior to being laid off?

a) $ 0 - 5000
b) $ 5000 - 10 000
c) $ 10 000 - 20 000
d) $ 20 000 - 30 000
e) $ 30 000 - 40 000
f) $ 40 000 - 50 000
g) greater than $ 50 000

8. Please estimate how much your wage from your former job contributed toward your family's monthly income.

a) 25%
b) 50%
c) 75%
d) 100%

9. How many children do you have? ____

10. How many dependents do you support financially? _____

11. Indicate the financial obligations you are responsible for. (You may need to circle more than one)

a) mortgage
b) student loans
c) car payments
d) personal loans
e) other _____

12. Indicate how much of a financial impact you believe the loss of your income will have on your family.

a. very severe
b. severe
c. moderate
d. low
e. none

Appendix E

Instructions

Instructions

1. Please sign and date Participant Consent Form.

2. Please complete all 4 questionnaires.

3. Please keep Participant Information Form and Support Resources sheet for your personal reference.

4. Please return completed questionnaires (in the brown envelope) and Participant Consent Form (in the white envelope) using the addressed, stamped envelopes provided. This is to ensure confidentiality.

5. Participants who wish to know the results of this study may include their name and address on a separate sheet of paper, and results will be mailed to you when available

Thank You!

Appendix F

Participant Information Form

Participant Information Form

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. As you know, the last year has seen a developing job loss crisis in the Province of Alberta which has stemmed largely from current economic conditions and recent ongoing budgetary cuts made by the Provincial Government. I am interested in evaluating the human costs of escalating involuntary job loss, particularly as they relate to issues of personal identity. To this end, I request that you fill out three questionnaires and a personal data sheet to provide information regarding your thoughts, feelings and attitudes and values related to work, life, your response to being laid off, and general demographic information. Completion of the surveys will take approximately one hour. All information will be kept strictly confidential. A code will be used to identify all survey materials and any potential identifying characteristics of participants will be altered in the write up of this study.

I am conducting this study at the University of Alberta toward the fulfillment of the thesis component of a Master of Educational Psychology Degree in Counselling Psychology. This research study has been approved by my thesis supervisor, a tenured professor at the University of Alberta, and by the Department of Educational Psychology Ethical Review Committee.

Again, I thank you for aiding me in my research during this stressful period. It is my hope that your contribution will allow a better understanding of the impact on and the needs of individuals laid off

under today's social and economic conditions. Although the results of this research will not be of direct benefit to participants, all participants will be provided with a list of Support Resources containing the names of counselors and agencies experienced in providing services to those who have been laid off.

The results of this study will be furnished to participants upon request. Should you have any further questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me in the evenings at 431-1671.

Dr. Gretchen Hess
(Thesis Supervisor)

Gail Cleary
Educational Psychology

Appendix G

Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

Study Topic: Identity and involuntary job loss

The nature and purpose of this study have been explained to me by Gail Cleary.

I understand that I will be asked to complete three questionnaires and a personal data sheet. My time commitment will be approximately one hour.

I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any question I wish and that I may discontinue filling in any questionnaire at any time if desired. I understand that my responses will be strictly confidential and that the coding of the questionnaires will ensure that my anonymity will be preserved.

I give my informed consent to participate in the research study and to release the data obtained for use in Mrs. Cleary's M. Ed. thesis and for future research and educational purposes conducted by Mrs. Cleary. I also understand that my consent can be withdrawn at any time.

_____ _____

(Participant's signature) **(Researcher's signature)**

_____

(Date)

Appendix H

Support Resources Form

Support Resources

The following is a list of agencies and individuals who are experienced in providing psychological support services to those undergoing stress related to job loss and unemployment. For those experiencing financial distress, counselling may be obtained on a sliding scale based on income and number of family members from the first three sources on the list.

The Family Center
Ron McCloud
423-2831
Fee: $85
Sliding scale available

Strathcona Family and Community Services
Available only to County of Strathcona residents
464-4044
Fee: Sliding scale $6 - $50

Blair McPherson
423-1096
Fee: $65
Sliding scale available to those in grave financial distress

Psycom
Bonnie Haave
424-1555
Fee: $85

Priority 1
Noreen Paananen
Wes Penner
433-6811
Fee: $80